

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 MCT-01 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 CU-02 /072 W
-----190222Z 088206 /70

R 190017Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5015

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MANILA 0884

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, SHUM, RP, US

SUBJECT: CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS

SUMMARY: REGIME'S PUBLIC CAMPAIGN AGAINST SO CALLED
"CHRISTIAN LEFT" HAS BEEN IN ABEYANCE SINCE EARLY DECEMBER.
IF REVIVED, IT WILL PROBABLY NOT RESUME UNTIL AFTER MEETING
OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS, LED BY BISHOP CLAYER, WILL PRESS CONFERENCE
TO TAKE STRONG PUBLIC STAND AGAINST MARCOS' "PERSECUTION"
OF THE CHURCH. REPORTEDLY, GOVERNMENT HAS LIST OF PRIESTS
AND NUNS, INCLUDING SEVERAL AMERICANS, TO BE DEPORTED WHEN
TIME IS PROPITIOUS. MARYKNOLL BISHOP REGAN OF TAGUM IS
WRITING PROMINENT MEMBERS OF US CATHOLIC HIERARCHY SEEKING
THEIR SUPPORT AND ATTACKING MARCOS. IF BISHOPS' CONFERENCE
IN CEBU FAILS ADOPT STRONG STAND, MARCOS AND HIS MILITARY
ADVISERS COULD DECIDE RENEW ANTI-CHURCH CAMPAIGN, ALTHOUGH
MARCOS' CURRENT ARRAY OF PROBLEMS WOULD SEEM TO MILITATE
AGAINST A POTENTIALLY DIVISIVE ANTI-CHURCH CAMPAIGN AT THIS
PARTICULAR TIME. END SUMMARY.

1. GOVERNMENT'S PUBLIC CAMPAIGN AGAINST CHRISTIAN LEFT
HAS BEEN IN ABEYANCE SINCE EARLY DECEMBER. IN AFTERMATH
OF EXPULSION OF TWO AMERICAN MISSIONARIES AND CLOSURE OF
COMMUNICATOR AND THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES, REGIME OFFICIALS
AND GUIDED PRESS HAVE DOWNPLAYED CHRISTIAN LEFT THEME.

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HIATUS IN REGIME'S PROPAGANDA OFFENSIVE PROBABLY
ATRIBUTABLE TO GOVERNMENT DESIRE TO GAUGE CHURCH'S
REACTION. SO FAR REACTION MUTED, ESPECIALLY OUTSIDE
MINDANAO, ALTHOUGH ACTIVIST BISHOPS AND FOREIGN MISSION-
AIRES ARE PRESSING FOR UPCOMING BISHOPS' CONFERENCE IN
CEBU JANUARY 25-31 TO TAKE STRONG STAND AGAINST WHAT THEY
TERM "PERSECUTION."

2. DURING VISIT TO MALAYBALAY, DAVAO AND TAGUM (JAN 13-17), EMBOFF DISCUSSED UPCOMING BISHOPS' CONFERENCE WITH MEMBERS OF HIERARCHY. BISHOP CLAVER, WHO CLAIMED CEBU CONFERENCE WILL "MAKE OR BREAK CHURCH IN THE PHILIPPINES," MAINTAINED THAT, BECAUSE OF EXPULSION OF MISSIONARIES AND PICKUP OF LEADING CHURCH LAYMENT IN DAVAO PROVINCES, NOW EVEN CONSERVATIVE BISHOPS WANT CONFERENCE TO ADOPT UNEQUIVOCAL STAND AGAINST GOVERNMENT AND MAKE STRONG PUBLIC STATEMENT. CLAVER SAID THAT FOR FIRST TIME ALL BISHOPS OF MINDANAO ARE UNITED. EMBOFF ALSO DISCUSSED CONFERENCE WITH DAVAO ARCHBISHOP MABUTAS AND TAGUM'S BISHOP REGAN JANUARY 16. MABUTAS, A NATIVE OF ILOCOS NORTE, SAID HE TOLD NUNCIO (WHO VISITED DAVAO JANUARY 15) THAT INCIDENTS IN DAVAO CONSTITUTE "PERSECUTION" AND BISHOPS MUST CONDEMN IT. NUNCIO, HOWEVER, WAS NONCOMMITTAL AND CAUTIONED AGAINST CONFRONTATION. BISHOP REGAN (IMPRISONED BY CHINESE COMMUNISTS AND QUITE CONSERVATIVE) PROVIDED EMBOFF COPY OF LETTERS HE IS SENDING TO LEADING MEMBERS OF US CATHOLIC HIERARCHY, INCLUDING CARDINALS IN NEW YORK, BOSTON AND WASHINGTON, CLAIMING MARCOS PERSECUTES CHURCH. (COPY POUCHED EA/PHL.)

3. IN REGAL'S PRELATURE OF TAGUM, LAST 20 OF ORIGINAL 68 DETAINEES RELEASED "TEMPORARILY" FOR TWO WEEKS. BISHOP REGAN THEORIZES THAT THIS MAY BE GOVERNMENT GESTURE TO WIN GOOD WILL OF NON-COMMITTED BISHOPS PRIOR TO CEBU CONFERENCE, ALTHOUGH IT MIGHT ALSO BE CONFIDENTIAL

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ACCOUNTED FOR BY LOCAL PC'S INABILITY TO FEED DETAINEES. REGAN SAID PC COMMANDERS ACTUALLY ASKED HIM IF DIOCESE COULD PAY FOR DETAINEES' MAINTENANCE COSTS IN PRISON. TAGUM CLERIC, FATHER NABAYRA, WHO RAN AFOUL OF PANAMIN,, REMAINS DETAINED AT CAMP CRAME. HE HAS PREPARED LENGTHY REPORT DETAILING PANAMIN MISDEEDS IN DAVAO WHICH BISHOP REGAN WILL DISTRIBUTE AT BISHOPS' CONFERENCE. BEFORE THIS CONFERENCE BISHOPS MABUTAS, REGAN, CLAVER AND SEVERAL OTHERS IN WHOSE DIOCESES PANAMIN OPERATES WILL MEET WITH SECRETARY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE ENRILE. MEETING TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 21.

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 MCT-01 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 CU-02 /072 W
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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MANILA 0884

4. DISCUSSIONS WITH JESUITS IN BUKIDNON, MARYKNOLL FATHERS IN DAVAO, AS WELL AS WITH CHURCH LEADERS IN MANILA AREA, INDICATE FOLLOWING PRIESTS ARE BELIEVED TO BE ON GOP'S DEPORTATION LIST: MANILA: FATHERS JAMES REUTER, JOHN DOHERTY AND WILLIAM KEYES, ALL JESUIT AND AMERICAN (SEE MANILA 627). BUKIDNON: FATHERS VINCENT CULLEN AND CALVIN POULIN, BOTH JESUITS. DEPORTATION OF PROMINENT JESUITS, MANY OF WHOM HAVE SERVED IN PHILIPPINES FOR DECADES (REUTER WAS DETAINED BY JAPANESE DURING OCCUPATION) WOULD BE EXTREMELY SERIOUS IN VIEW POTENTIAL FOR ADVERSE PR IN US. SHOULD GOP DECIDE DEPORT THESE JESUITS (WHICH STILL IN REALM OF POSSIBLE NOT PROBABLE) REGIME WOULD PRESUMABLY TAKE INTO ACCOUNT LOCAL HIERARCHY'S TRADITIONAL SUSPICION AND DISLIKE OF JESUITS. REGIME WOULD ALSO BE EXPLOITING NATIVE CHURCH'S IRRITATION (OFTEN JUSTIFIED) OF FOREIGN MISSIONARIES "NEO COLONIAL" ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR. CARDINAL SIN FOR ONE IS REPORTED FURIOUS AT LETTER RECENTLY PRESENTED TO HIM FROM FOREIGN MISSIONARIES IN MANILA. IT IS EXTREMELY CRITICAL OF HIS LACK OF CONCERN FOR FOREIGN MISSIONARIES OF HIS ARCHDIOCESE. LETTER'S PREEMPTORY AND HECTORING TONE SIMILAR TO THAT OF LETTER PRESENTED TO AMBASSADOR ON GERLOCK CASE BY MARYKNOLL SUPERIOR. IT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN AT LEAST PARTIALLY AUTHORED BY FATHER JOHN DOWLING, AN
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ABRASIVE MARYKNOLL FATHER RECENTLY ASSIGNED TO "JUSTICE AND PEACE" WORK IN MANILA AFTER TEN YEARS IN AN ISOLATED PARISH IN DAVAO DEL NORTE.

5. COMMENT: AS ONE EXPERIENCED PRIEST/POLITICIAN (JESUIT FATHER PACIFICO ORTIZ, FORMER ATENEO PRESIDENT AND CONCON DELEGATE) RECENTLY REMARKED TO EMBOFF,

MARCOS IS PAST MASTER OF "POLITICAL ACUPUNCTURE." THUS CURRENT HIATUS IN CAMPAIGN TO HARRY "CHRISTIAN LEFT" PROBABLY CAREFULLY CALCULATED. MARCOS IS ASSESSING CHURCH'S REACTION TO EVENTS OF NOVEMBER AND EARLY DECEMBER. REPORTEDLY HE IS ALSO CONCERNED AT POSSIBILITY PICKUP OF LAYMEN IN DAVAO AREA AND ACTIVITIES OF PANAMIN HAVE "RADICALIZED" PREVIOUSLY CONSERVATIVE CHURCHMEN. CHURCH'S REACTION TO RECENT EVENTS WILL BECOME MORE MANIFEST DURING BISHOPS' CONFERENCE IN CEBU, THREE DAYS OF WHICH ARE TO BE DEVOTED TO INFORMAL EXCHANGE ON CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS. QUESTION IS WHETHER BISHOP CLAVER AND HIS MINDANAO COLLEAGUES WILL BE ABLE TO PERSUADE MORE CONSERVATIVE CLERICS STRONG STAND MUST BE TAKEN. SHOULD CONFERENCE REVEAL CONTINUED DISUNITY IN HIERARCHY AND RELUCTANCE TO CHALLENGE REGIME, PRESIDENT MARCOS, SPURRED ON BY POLITICALLY INSENSITIVE MILITARY ADVISERS SUCH AS VER, PAZ AND RAMOS, MAY FEEL TIME IS PROPITIOUS FOR ANOTHER APPLICATION OF PRESSURE AND DECIDE TO DEPORT SOME MORE FOREIGN MISSIONARIES. EXPLUSION OF WELL CONNECTED JESUITS LIKE REUTER (WHO HELPED MAKE TV AND RADIO COMMERCIALS FOR MARCOS' 1965 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN) WOULD REPRESENT MAJOR ESCALATION IN ANTI-CHURCH CAMPAIGN AND WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY PRESENT GOP WITH FORMIDABLE PR PROBLEM IN US AND PERHAPS POLITICAL PROBLEM AS WELL. GIVEN THIS POSSIBILITY AND THE PANOPLY OF PROBLEMS MARCOS CONFRONTS, INCLUDING A) THE MINDANAO SETTLEMENT FOR WHICH CHURCH SUPPORT IS ESENTIAL, B) THE ECONOMY AND C) BASE AND ECONOMIC NEGOTIATIONS WITH US, WE ARE CONFIDENTIAL

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INCLINED TO BELIEVE HE WILL CONTINUE TO AVOID CONFRONTATION WITH CHURCH. NEVERTHELESS MARCOS IS AN OPPORTUNIST. IF HE SENSES CHURCH IS WEAK HE WILL EXPLOIT THIS WEAKNESS. SULLIVAN

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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